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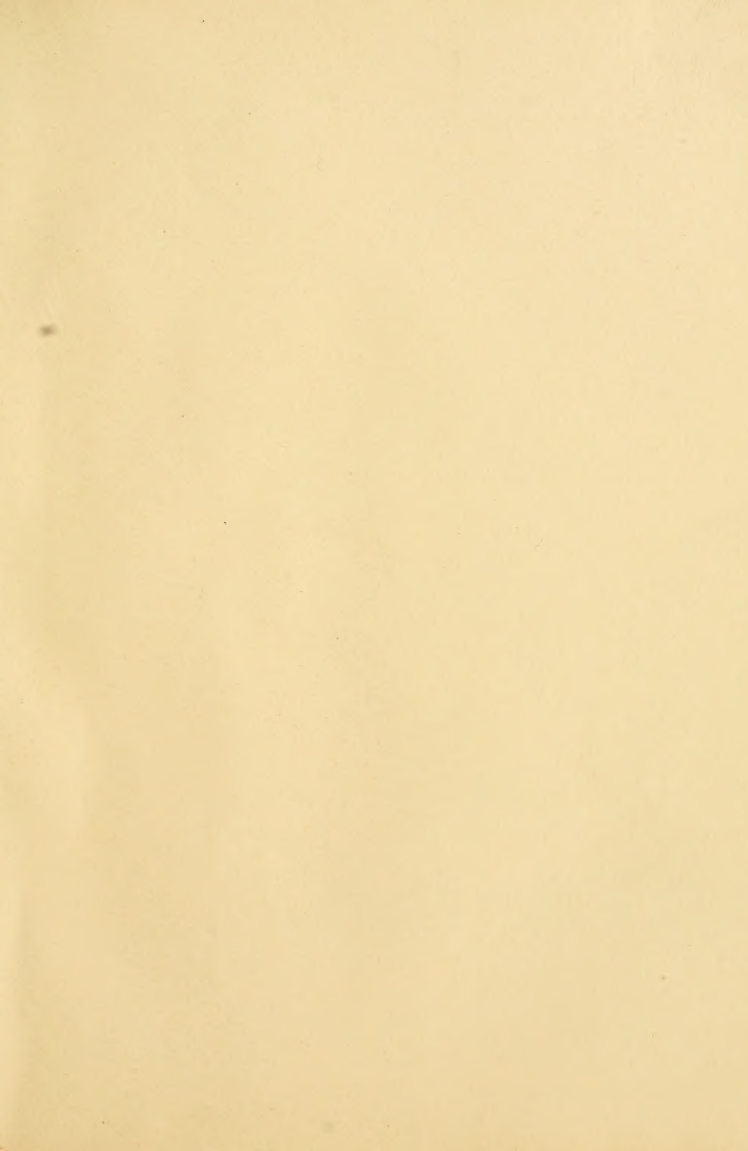
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My
CHRISTMAS FÊTE.



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My Christmas Fête.

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BY
ELIZBETH B. *Barber* COMINS.



BOSTON, U. S. A.
L. PRANG & COMPANY.

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* My Christmas Fête. *

1902

I HAD arranged a little Christmas fête,
To brighten up some youthful lives I knew:
Children to whom the toils and cares of life

Were too abundant, and its joys too few;
I'd bought the tallest tree that I could find
Would stand within the limits of my wall,
And every unsolded bough was laden down
With gifts to please the hearts of each and all

A loving friend, who knew of my intent,
Sent me a present which one asked should be,
In memory of Him whose birth we celebrate,
Hung on the wall where every eye could see:
It was a head of Christ upon the cross,
A face with agony in every line,
Upon his brow the cruel crown of thorns;
Outrageous insult to the King divine.



It chilled me to the heart to look at it
That tortured face in its death agonies;
Ah, not like that would I imprint the Christ
On little children's tender memories.
But as I held the picture in my hand,
Still looking sadly in those anguished eyes,
Mysteriously there came a wondrous change,
Which thrilled my bosom with a glad surprise.

The cruel cross grew faint behind bright beams.
Bright wondrous beams which seemed to spread
afar,
And have their centre in a glowing light,
Which shaped itself into a radiant star;
The pallid face grew round and fair and young.
The tortured eyes grew sweet and soft and
mild,
The crown of thorns became a holly wreath
Encircling the fair temples of a child.

A child with happy, smiling, heavenly face
His little arms in benediction spread,
Outstretched as if already he bestowed
Unnumbered blessings on each youthful heart
"Ah! thus," I cried, "shall those dear children see
The Christ-child blessing all their Christmas
mirth;
No shadow of the cross shall dim the joy
With which we celebrate the Saviour's birth."

I seized my brush and worked with feverish
haste

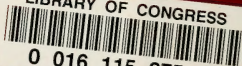
To fix those features ere they'd fade away:
And not in vain I tried the loving task,
For it was done before the close of day.
That night when all the happy children came
To what, to them, was an enchanted place,
There was not one who did not greet with smiles
My pictured vision of the Christ-child's face.







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